***Labour Leadership Contest***

Dear Editor,

The choice of voting procedure in the Labour Party's leadership election could be crucial.

Let the four candidate be ***A, B, C*** and ***D***.  If just 14 voters were to cast 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th preferences as follows,

2 prefer  ***A-B-C-D,***

3 ***B-A-C-D,***

4 ***C-A-B-D***and

5 ***D-A-C-B,***

it is probably fair to say that themost popular candidate would be ***A***, the 1st or 2nd preference of all 14 voters.

However, in a straight first-past-the-post contest, (as in UK elections), the ranking would be ***D-C-B-A***, 5-4-3-2, so the winner would be ***D*** with a score of 5.

The first stage of an STV election, otherwise known as the alternative vote, AV, (the Australian system), would give the above ranking, ***D-C-B-A***, 5-4-3-2, so ***A*** would be eliminated; in stage two, ***A***'s 2 votes would go to ***B***for the next ranking of ***B/D-C***, 5/5-4, so ***C*** would then be out; in stage three, ***C***'s 4 votes would also go to ***B,*** so ***B*** would beat ***D*** by 9-5.

In a two-round system, (as in France), ***C*** and ***D*** would go through to the second round and (assuming the voters' preferences remain unchanged), this would give victory to ***C*** by 9 to 5.

While in a Borda count points system, (which is used for ethnic minorities in Slovenia)  --  with 4 points for a 1st preference, 3 for a 2nd, etc.  --  the social ranking would be ***A-C-B-D***, 44-36-31-29, so the winner would be ***A***.

For this particular profile, then, the winner could be ***A*** or ***B*** or ***C*** or ***D***, depending on the method used.  This argument was sent to the four candidates; one responded, none replied; they're using AV.

Yours etc..